

From: Alex Brotman
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 8:32pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have quite a few issues with the proposed settlement of the Microsoft/DOJ trial. I will only point out the one that I think would be part of a fair punishment and allow for better competition in the Tech marketplace.

Microsoft has made some good products over the years and may do so in the future. Some of these products save or transmit data in its own proprietary format. This to me is one of the most damaging things about Microsoft and its products. I would propose that for the next 5 years(at least if not more) that Microsoft be forced to provide the specifications for its file formats and its transmission protocols to a general committee. These formats could then be used by competing companies to allow them to open Microsoft documents or send data to a Microsoft server. This would hopefully level the field and force each company to strive to deliver a technically superior product and not rely on a file format to force customers into upgrades and hold them in that chosen product. For example, Microsoft produces a word processor called Word, part of Microsoft Office. This program uses a format that is only known to Microsoft and therefore no other program can have full interoperability with Word. If the format were available for all to use then a program like WordPerfect or Star Office could open and save documents in Word format. This would allow companies to have a better choice in choosing a word processor and hopefully companies would deliver better products.

I have talked with other IT professionals about this and they say that Microsoft deserves to have this monopoly because they make good products. I say -- make the formats and protocols available to all and then let the market decide who has better products. I shouldn't be trapped into using a certain product just because it has a special format. That to me is the biggest part of Microsoft's monopoly.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alexander Brotman